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EM 212- Project Report #1

2015-2017 National Survey of Family Growth MALE Questionnaire

Introduction:

The dataset I will be using is from the 2015 to 2017 National Survey of Family Growth from the CDC, specifically their Male Questionnaire data.[1,2,3] The data contains demographic information about the men participating, along with when and where they learned about birth control, if they got a vasectomy and where they had the procedure, how many sexual partners do they have, what is their relationship with said partners, what form of birth control do they use, what form of birth control do their partners use, etc. This dataset also contains information about the family and children living in these men's lives.[1,2,3] However, I am most interested in the use of birth control by men with their partners.

Men only have two options when it comes to birth control: condoms and vasectomies. I am looking at this dataset to get a better understanding of what men in relationships chose to use as a form of birth control. What is great about this survey is that it also asks about the birth control that their partner is using, suggesting that men might just rely on their female partners for contraceptive methods.[2] I am also hoping this dataset will inform me on the situations when men are most likely to get a vasectomy (ie. what is the family dynamic at that time, what is the relationship status, how many children does he have, etc.).

There has been a lot of literature published about how many men have vasectomies and how many men use condoms for birth control.[4] There has even been research conducted to know why men get vasectomies reversed, suggesting that it has to do with how old the man was at the time of the procedure and if he is now divorced. However, while the article also addresses why some of the men chose to have a vasectomy in the first place, the article was published in 1982 and those reason may or may not be valid today.[5] According to a paper from 2016, only 2.4% of men around the world have a vasectomy. The article suggests that the low percentage is due to the misconception of the procedure, lack of encouragement for men to be a part of family planning, and insufficient political and financial support for bringing awareness. Still, this paper doesn't address why the men who have vasectomies elected to get one.[6] I desire to know the psychographics of the men who are willing to be a part of family planning. If they are willing to be a part of family planning now, there is a higher likelihood that they will continue and might be more engaged in family planning in the future if a long-acting reversible contraceptive for men came to market. What I am specifically interested in is seeing if there is a trend in the data to understand why men choose that specific birth control and to see if their partners play a role in their decisions.

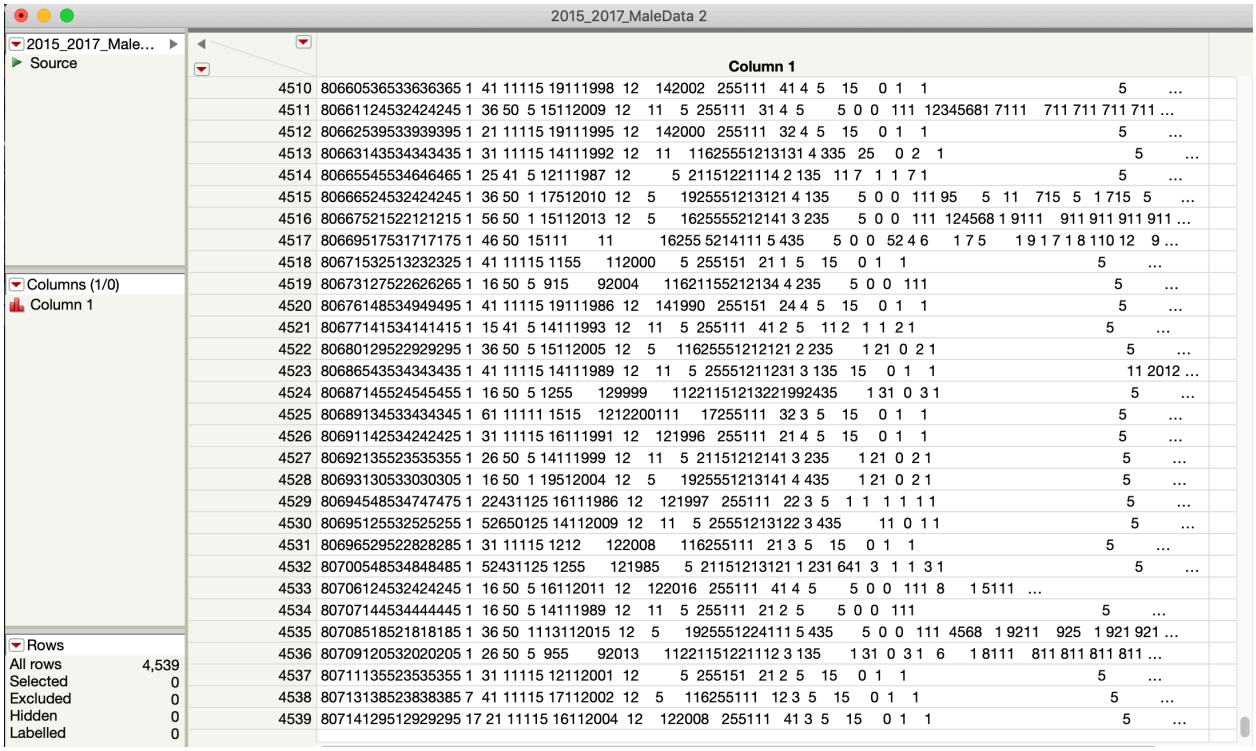
In order to best complete my analysis, I will be using the answers from the 2015 to 2017 National Survey of Family Growth Male Questionnaire that best paint the best picture of where this man is in life and how him and his partner made decisions on what contraceptive method(s) to use. Example of questions that collect the data needed for my analysis are questions asking about how the interviewee learned about sex and birth control, where to get birth control, if they have had a vasectomy or other sterilization operations, what their current household looks like (ie. do they have a current wife or cohabiting partner, how many biological and not biological

children do they have, what are his desires and intentions for future children, etc.), and what forms of birth control methods do the interviewee and his partner use to prevent pregnancy. This data was collected through in-person 60 minute interviews under Research Ethics Review Board guidelines. [2]

This information could be very valuable to someone who needs to know men's attitudes toward birth control. This information would be important for someone marketing a new form of birth control to men and knowing which demographic and psychographic group of men to target. With the current contraceptive market being dominated by contraceptive methods for women, companies developing a contraceptive for men will need as much insight as possible to obtain significant market share.

Problems Encountered in the Beginning:

An issue with the data that I have identified is that all of the answers were denoted with a number. There is a questionnaire and user guide that explains what question were asked and what each number indicates as an answer for the specific question. However, when I downloaded the dataset, one column has all the recorded answers in number form.[3] (See picture below to understand what I mean.[3]) In order to work with this dataset, I believe I will have to give each answer its own column, making it easier to sort through the data and answer my questions. I can see that process being long and tedious.



REFERENCES:

[1] User Guide: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nsfg/NSFG_2015_2017_UserGuide_MainText.pdf

[2] Questionnaire: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nsfg/NSFG_2015-2017_MaleCAPIlite_forPUF.pdf

[3] Datasets: ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/Datasets/NSFG/

[4] https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/contraceptive-use-united-states

[5] https://www.bmj.com/content/285/6340/490.abstract

[6] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5199180/pdf/647.pdf